

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Doug Moran, BPA President

Balance of Housing with Commercial/Retail

Land use decisions are at the core of city governance, a situation that surprises many people who become involved thinking that they will focus on other aspects. Land use decisions involve what sorts of development will be allowed at what locations, and how dense that development will be. Traffic and congestion are an obvious side-effect of these decisions. And the city's budget is largely determined by land-use decisions: It determines the amounts of different types of income (property tax, sales tax and other fees), but also the demands for services (police, fire, streets, ...).

The City is finally paying attention to the issue of the balance between commercial—especially retail—and housing. However, this came about as a result of many years of advocacy by residents, and without continuing pressure, the City Council could slip back into favoring housing for available parcels. Several major decisions are scheduled for this fall and winter (Zoning Ordinance Update)—information will be distributed to the email list.

Several members of Council are strongly inclined to let developers decide how best to develop properties, and for the foreseeable future, that means conversion to high-

er-density housing. Several other members of Council are philosophically inclined to build more high-density housing whenever the opportunity presents itself, but are responsive to reasoned arguments about balance. Together, these two categories constitute a majority of Council.

Comments to Council by residents at the time of important votes is critical because Council members otherwise unconsciously succumb to the belief that the opinions of their circle of acquaintances is roughly representative of the city as a whole. *An example:* One veteran Council member—a routine supporter of the developers—has repeatedly characterized the concern about this balance as “a fad” and saying that just 2-3 years ago residents strongly supported building large amount of high-density housing. However, this has been a persistent issue for over a decade. For example, in the early 1990's, the principles of balance were a key component of the Comprehensive Plan—from which zoning flows—and one of the featured workshops addressed the problems of the imbalances in the south El Camino corridor created by the previous Comprehensive Plan. In 2002, residents filled Council Chambers to oppose a Staff proposal to convert much of the commercial zoning along El Camino to housing. In 2003, Council approved a 6-month

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 2]

Am I a Member OR NOT?

By Linda Elder, Membership Chair

Hello Barron Park Association Members. If you received this newsletter you are a member! Thank you for supporting our neighborhood association! We have 421 members so far this membership year. Your membership helps support neighborhood events such as the ever-popular May Fete, our quarterly newsletter, the Holiday Party, and the Welcome Gathering in late summer. I hope that you will attend a BPA event this year or perhaps consider attending a Board Meeting. We are looking for active members and ways to get our members more actively involved.



INSIDE

3	3	4	4	6	8	10	11
Emergency Preparedness Articles	2007 Donkey Calendar	Senior Update, Fall 2006	A Very Special Table	What was going on in Barron Park in...19X6?	Kid's Korner	How the BPA Stacks Up	Toxics Update

moratorium on development in the Charleston-Arastradero corridor—prompted by the neighborhood associations, the then-new Planning Director Steve Emslie recognized that the cumulative effects of the anticipated housing development exceeded what the City had planned for.

So that you can make your opinions and concerns known to Council members—either through e-mail or appearing at Council meetings—I intend to continue to distribute information about these issues on the BPA-News email list. The idea of surveying the neighborhood and presenting the results to the Council has come up repeatedly—from both residents and Board members—but the logistics have made it impractical: A *meaningful* survey requires both a carefully crafted set of questions and *informed* participants. Staff recommendations become public roughly 75 hours (3+ days) before the Council meeting, and often include substantial and significant changes from earlier drafts. There is just too much to do in too little time.

Relation of Staff and Council

Most residents don't realize that the City Staff does not work for the City Council—Staff works for the City Manager who is appointed by the City Council (called a *Strong City Manager* form of government). In an analogy to the corporate world, Council is the board of directors and the City Manager is the CEO (Chief Executive Officer). Council questions and requests go to the City Manager, who then decides whether and how they will be dealt with by Staff.

Example: Council designated Emergency Preparedness as a *Top 3* priority for this year, but the City Manager, and hence Staff, has dragged their heels (Patrick Muffler's article reflects some of that frustration).

Example: The City Manager is widely viewed as dragging his heels on improving the City's revenue. He rebuffed Council's attempt to add an Economic Development specialist position to Staff. His report to Council on how to improve revenues was roundly criticized as inadequate and unimaginative. During the Staff discussion of the future of the current commercial area between Page Mill and Lambert (centered on Fry's), the effects of converting this area from businesses to housing was

ruled irrelevant to the considerations (Council rejected part of this).

Example: In a discussion of a potential reorganization of the Planning Department, the City Manager failed to provide a credible rationale for his proposal and brushed aside reasonable questions and concerns. After a heated session, the City Manager relented, but I described his behavior as "open contempt" for Council.

Aside: Consequently, I was surprised that Council voted to give him a bonus for this year (4-3 with 2 absent). I had anticipated the vote going the other way.

Council members have to deal with far too many issues to have time to develop the necessary expertise on each. And with no support staff of their own, many Council members welcome analyses by community members who have developed expertise on a particular topic. These analyses are especially useful to Council as a supplement to the official Staff report because they can identify and focus on what tend to be the key policy questions as well as critiquing the Staff recommendation.

Under-experienced candidates: The need for such analyses has become more important because people are being elected to Council with far less experience than in previous years. It has become possible to be widely regarded as a serious candidate for Council despite not ever having even *watched* a single session, much less having participated in a single hearing. In an (unsuccessful) attempt to highlight differences between the candidates, the PAN (Palo Alto Neighborhoods) questionnaire asked Council candidates to provide details of their participation. The value of simply watching these meetings was demonstrated in the Council Candidate debates in 2005: former homeless person Norman Carroll had this experience and consequently outshone most of the "serious candidates" in term of knowledge and depth of understanding of issues facing the City. (Carroll is not to be confused with perennial candidate Victor Frost).

A similar situation exists for appointments to the Planning and Transportation Commission (PTC), the second-most important policy body. Some candidates attend their first meeting of the Commission only after finding a question about

this on the application form. Others claim to have attended a meeting, but can't remember the date or topic.

I don't expect this situation to change. When discussing candidates with various "opinion leaders," what I commonly hear is that they are "comfortable" with that person because they know him/her from a charitable or civic organization, where they have rendered good service. Discouragingly, the leaders who bemoan this trend are often found among the early backers of inexperienced candidates.

Role of Neighborhood Associations

The neighborhood associations (NAs) have become a major player in City politics, and have a role that is different from the other advocacy groups. First, the NAs are not single issue advocacy groups: This forces them to address many of the tradeoffs that Council will be considering. Second, the larger NAs distribute background material and arrange meetings to keep their membership informed on relevant issues. This selection, filtering, and reorganizing of the material is analogous to "*The best way to learn a subject is to teach it.*" Third, by sponsoring and promoting meetings on upcoming issues, the NAs expose Staff to a broader range of public concerns at earlier stages in the process—a time when it is easier to remedy problems. Finally, the neighborhood associations as a group have a pool of expertise and mentoring that can help residents dealing with new issues.

How you can get involved

There are lots of opportunities to get involved in these issues. For example, people with skills creating presentations are invaluable because some of the people with expertise don't have the time, inclination, or ability to reduce the key information to something that an interested resident can and will read. As you participate in such efforts, you pick up expertise by osmosis. I have been involved in this manner for over a decade, and there are some areas where I have become an expert and others where I consult with people like Bob Moss.

Please consider becoming more involved—there are a number of big decisions scheduled for the next several years that will have a dramatic impact on the long-term livability of Palo Alto.

3¹/₂ years of BPA Newsletter articles on Emergency Preparedness

By Patrick Muffler, Chair, Emergency Preparedness Committee

I had hoped to be able to report upon the city having established the long awaited Task Force on Disaster Preparedness, but as of August there has been yet another delay.

Over 3¹/₂ years I have written eleven articles and am finding it harder and harder to find new approaches to things I have said—and that have been said by others—many times before. Not wishing to repeat myself, I'll provide a short synopsis to each article, in the hope that interested readers will go to the web page www.bpaonline.org/eprep-articles/ for the details.

Spring 2003

- Types of disasters that might affect Barron Park: earthquakes, floods, toxic spills, and terrorism (this was before pandemic bird flu was emphasized as a concern).
- Community preparedness vs. household preparedness.
- Only 20% of the households in Barron Park are prepared.

Summer 2003

- A large earthquake along the Hayward Fault would likely rupture the Hetch Hetchy aqueduct, which supplies all of our water.
- A person can survive for weeks with minimal food, but only a few days without water.
- Every household needs to prepare for a week without water from any outside source.

Fall 2003

- A major emergency could be caused by failure of the electric power grid, as happened on 14 August 2003 throughout the Northeast.
- Each household needs to provide for its basic needs for several days to a week.
- Carry an emergency kit in your car.

Spring 2004

- Agencies in Palo Alto that deal with Emergency Preparedness: Office of Emergency Services and its PANDA program, Red Cross, Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services (ARES/RACES).

Summer 2004

- Palo Alto's Emergency Community Notification System (automated emergency phone messages to areas affected by a danger).
- Other possible means of emergency notification (e-mail lists, phone trees) [*n.b.*: this issue is still not resolved, two years later].

Winter 2004–2005

- A friend's personal experience with Hurricane Ivan illustrates how aggressive emergency preparedness can allow one to survive a major disaster.
- A 62% probability of at least one magnitude 6.7 or greater earthquake striking the San Francisco Bay region before 2032, disrupting water, gas and electricity supplies.
- Government resources will be overwhelmed, and that each household must

provide for its basic needs for up to a week.

Spring 2005

- A general overview of emergency preparedness.

Summer 2005

- The Palo Alto Neighborhood Disaster Activity (PANDA) is a program designed to assist the Palo Alto Fire and Police Departments in the event of a major disaster.
- Barron Park residents encouraged to take the free PANDA training offered by the Palo Alto Office of Emergency Services.

Winter 2005–2006

- Emergency preparedness is truly boring, but absolutely essential, since we face a major earthquake hazard with the same potential for devastation as Hurricane Katrina presented to the Gulf Coast. See "Putting down Roots in Earthquake Country" at <http://pubs.usgs.gov/gip/2005/15/>
- A list of Web sites related to emergency preparedness, all of which worked on 14 August 2006.

Spring 2006

- Successful efforts to divert floodwaters from Barron Creek to Matadero Creek, thus providing 100-year (one-percent) flood protection to Barron Park.

Summer 2006

- Personal and Household Preparation for a Possible Bird Flu Pandemic.

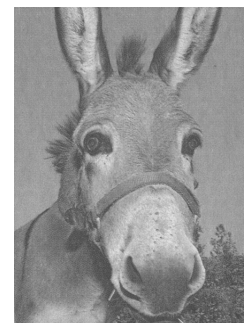
2007 DONKEY CALENDAR

Save your money and plan to spend it at the Holiday Party this December. Barron Park will have a second annual donkey calendar for 2007. If you missed the first annual, don't worry, as the second will be just as good. The 2006 calendar was produced by Brandy Faulkner, and she already has the photos laid out for the 2007 calendar.

Brandy especially wants to thank all the

people who bought the 2006 calendar. Through sales, plus a few subsidies, the calendar brought in almost \$500 for the donkeys' fund.

The 2007 calendar will be for sale at Edith Smith's stand at the Holiday Party, along with her silk-screened t-shirts and water colors of the donkeys. Other marketing plans for the calendars will be announced by e-mail as they are developed.



SENIOR UPDATE, FALL 2006

By Mary Jane Leon

Join us for Lunch

We have had two summer lunches in Bol Park, both great fun. Driftwood Deli did its usual gourmet sandwiches for us, and the weather cooperated for both lunches.

The next lunch will be at Dinah's Poolside Restaurant, just behind Trader Vic's on El Camino, at 1 p.m. on Tuesday, October 10. They have lovely poolside dining, but if the weather is not the best for that, we will be eating inside. Put it on your calendar now, so you save the date. After your wonderful lunch, take a minute to admire the koi pond that wanders through the site. This is a real Palo Alto treasure that apparently never gets any publicity.

If you would like to join us for lunch, and are not already on our e-mail or phone list to be notified, call Rosemary Jacobsen, 493-9152.

Jazz at the Elks Lodge

Definitely, whether you like to dance or just listen, check out Jazz at the Elks Club. We went during the summer and recommend it. The concerts are the last Sunday of each month, from 1 to 5 p.m. The music is "Big Band," definitely danceable, and the audience is mostly dancers, though listeners like us enjoy it too. We are told that the Elks Club dance floor is especially good, and that is a particular draw for dancers. The fee is \$15 for the afternoon. For more information, phone the Elks club at 493-4249, or Ann Burgess at (408) 348-9324. She is the President of the South Bay Traditional Jazz Society, which is responsible for the jazz concerts.

Supporting Local Schools

Our kids may be long gone from the local schools, even our grandkids, but the future of our neighborhood is in the hands of the kids now in our schools, and they could use a little financial help from us. Don't get me started on why schools have to go begging in this affluent land. This is a family newsletter. Suffice it to say that there is at least one easy way to give the schools a hand without it costing you a penny. That program is **escrip**.

Barron Park School tells us that they took

in over \$2000 last school year from this program. Briones School took in a similar amount. It is as easy as answering a few questions on the **escrip** web site, <http://www.escrip.com/>. You fill in the name or number of the school you want to help and your credit card numbers (yes, its safe). The merchants turn over cash equal to a percentage of what you spend during the year to the school of your choice.

Check it out. The id number for Briones School is 136556404 and for Barron Park School is 137121755. If you don't "do inter-

net", the local librarian can help you register, or ask a neighbor.

Resources

From time to time we will include in this column ways to get information of particular value to seniors. Today we have:

- The web site www.medicare.gov will help you evaluate the quality of nursing homes and home health agencies.
- e-mail pnatarajan@ymcamidpen.org for information about free local computer classes.

A VERY SPECIAL TABLE

There is a very special new picnic table in the shade at the end of the playground in Bol Park.

Donated by Kim and Ken Perlmutter, in memory of their son Joey,* and by other contributors, this table is a jewel. It is scaled for children-but not so low as to be uncomfortable for adults. And, best of all... the table is a mural!



Painted by Morgan Bricca, this table sums up the wonderful country atmosphere we have in Barron Park. The donkeys, of course, but also chickens, ducks, geese, wild birds, other animals, and the natural streams that we are so lucky to have.

Morgan is a well-known muralist who lives in our neighborhood. Her web site is <http://www.muralsbymorgan.com/>. She donated her time and paints for this mural



as a gift to Barron Park and to all the children who will come and enjoy it.

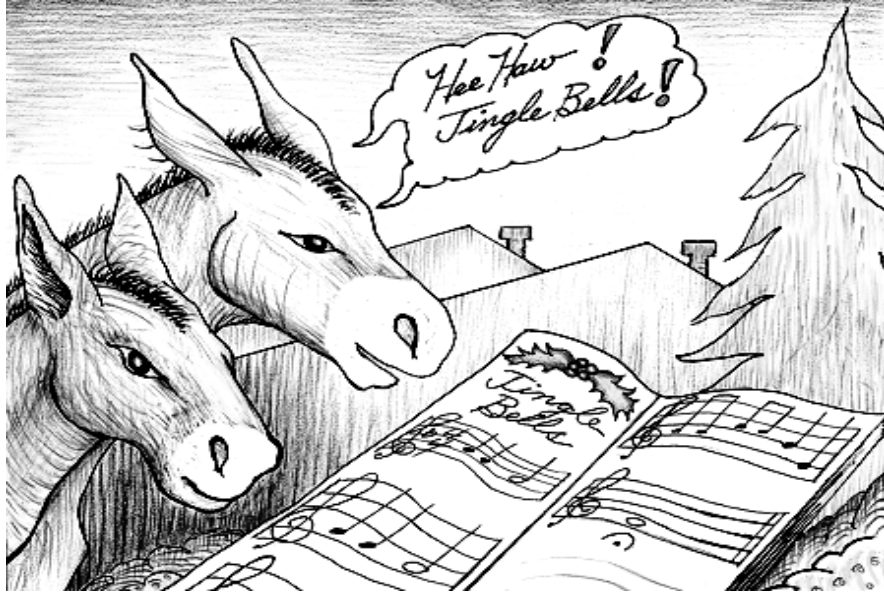
*The address for Joey's memorial fund is
Joseph's Journey Fund
Peninsula Community Foundation
1700 South El Camino Real, Suite 300
San Mateo, CA 94402-3049



* FIFTH ANNUAL *

Barron Park Neighborhood Holiday Party and Donkey Parade

Featuring the Gunn High School Chamber Singers



Pericles (Perry) and Miner 49er (Niner), the Barron Park community donkeys

Walk with Perry and 'Niner through our neighborhood!
Sing seasonal favorites! Bring your kids and animals!

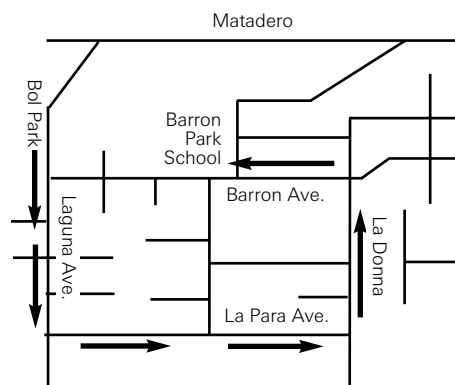
Saturday, December 18th

Parade: 2:30 pm Bol Park – Rain or Shine!

Party: 3:15 pm Barron Park School

Parade Route:

Meet at Bol Park 2:30 pm
Leave Bol Park 2:45 pm
Laguna to La Para
La Para to La Donna
La Donna to Barron
Barron to Barron Park School



Refreshments and singing at
Barron Park School

Multi Purpose Room 3:15 pm

(If you can bring goodies for the
party, please call Don Anderson
at 494-8672)

What was going on in Barron Park in...19X6?

By Doug Graham, Barron Park Historian

1926—Eighty Years Ago—The Jazz Age

Things were pretty quiet in Barron Park in 1926, although probably some strains of jazz could be heard from Victrola record players from time to time. Barron Park's second suburban housing development, the Irven subdivision, was laid out on August 16. Thirty-five lots on Alta Mesa Avenue and Irven Court were platted, but nobody built a house there. Elsewhere, 13 houses were built in 1926, bringing the neighborhood grand total to 45 by the end of the year. Eight of these were in the original Barron Park subdivision that had been opened for development the previous year. Most of the neighborhood was being farmed, with the majority of the land probably either in strawberries or hayfields. The California Military Academy, a private Boy's School was occupying the old "Barron" Mansion and 15 landscaped acres surrounding it surrounding, located where today's Woodland Park tract exists on Magnolia Avenue and Military Way.

Matadero Avenue had been laid out from The State Highway (now El Camino Real) to the Southern Pacific Railroad and Peninsular Railway that ran side-by-side where the bike path runs through Bol Park today. However, there was no stop on the railway; Neal Station would not be built for another seven years yet. Also, there were no bridges across Matadero Creek. Instead, ramps were cut in the steep walls of the channel and you simply drove or walked through the water to cross. The bridge on Matadero Avenue at Tippawingo and Josina was built in 1929 and the one on Laguna Avenue at the Park was built in 1933. In 1926, Elsa Preminger bought a 1-acre parcel on Matadero above the railroad where the land slopes up a slight hill. Although the Premingers apparently didn't build until 1932, Elsa took photographs of the hayfields on her property and the orchard below. Her photographs give us one of the best known views of our neighborhood in 1926. One of the things she loved about her

land was that you could stand by the back fence next to the Stanford property and see San Francisco Bay.

1936—Seventy Years Ago—The Great Depression

Two critical events in our history happened in 1936—the Bols arrived on Roble Ridge, and the Barron Mansion burned down. Cornelis and Josina Bol emigrated from Holland in 1936, at least partly to escape the growing menace of Hitler and his Nazi Party across the border in Germany. Cornelis, a chemist, was offered a research assistantship at Stanford, where he became the inventor of the mercury vapor lamp, which is still the brightest artificial light source in existence. They visited friends on Roble Ridge and Josina fell in love with the gently rolling, oak-studded knoll along Matadero Creek. Cornelis became interested in the inadequate water supply from the local private Emway Water Company, and eventually took control of it. He and Josina and their older three sons ran and expanded the company until runaway growth in the neighborhood forced them to sell to the City in 1953. However, none of this was decisive in our history. What was decisive was Josina's decision, made after Cornelis' death, to sell their donkey pasture to the neighborhood at far-below-market value. This enabled the creation of Bol Park and changed our landscape forever. The donkeys became cherished symbols of the neighborhood and have provided fun for at least two generations of Barron Park Children and their parents.

The second critical event was the destruction, by accidental fire, of the eighty-year-old Victorian house widely known as "The Barron Mansion". As I wrote in the Winter, 2005 edition of this newsletter, "It was a spectacular blaze. Barron Park has never seen anything like it before or since. It went up in a holocaust of flame and smoke that attracted thrill-seekers for miles around. But this wasn't the critical event. What was critical was the lack of response from the Palo Alto Fire Department. As Joe

Weiler said in his oral history, "...they did come to the end of the city limits with one of their units...and just sat there. They wouldn't answer the call because...they wouldn't go out of their district." However, Menlo Park, Redwood City, Moffat Naval Air Station and the County all sent units, but it was too late. Many Barron Parkers never forgave the City of Palo Alto for their lack of response and it was a major factor in the bitter opposition against annexation movements for the next thirty years. It is hard to say what our neighborhood would look like today had we annexed in 1946 instead of 1975, but it sure would be different.

1946—Sixty Years Ago—The Post-War Era

By the end of 1936 there had been 128 homes in Barron Park. In 1946, the year ended with 290 homes, but we hadn't seen anything yet. Barron Park became the target of developers of mass housing for the returning G.I.s and our largest housing tract, Encina Grande Park, was platted in 1946, although no houses were built until the following year. More upscale developments were the La Mata Tract on part of the old Neal property along Laguna Avenue at the railroad, and an unnamed subdivision of 16 lots on Manzana Lane.

The big news was the decision of the Palo Alto Unified School District, prodded by Board Chairman and Matadero Avenue resident David Packard, to provide Barron Park with an elementary school of its' own. As I wrote in the Spring, 1995 issue, "Ever since 1926, Barron Park children had attended school in Mayfield, most recently at the old Mayfield School, which was located on El Camino between California Avenue and Page Mill Road." The new school site of nearly seven acres had been acquired by the District in 1940 at a cost of \$8,654. World War II intervened, but finally the construction decision was made in December, 1946. The school was designed by the locally-famed architect, Birge Clark, and was built in 1948 for about \$132,000.

For this, we got six classrooms, and Kindergarten and the administrative offices.

1956—Fifty Years Ago—The Decade of Growth

The first of the tail fins on new cars and the last year before Elvis Presley. “I Like Ike” and McCarthyist frenzy won Dwight Eisenhower a landslide over the hapless second-time loser, dignified and intellectual Adlai Stevenson. Barron Park was exploding in growth, with 1,069 houses recorded by the end of the year. Most of the subdivisions had already been platted in earlier years; the only new one in 1956 was the Cobb Subdivision of four lots at the end of Chimalus Avenue.

The Barron Park and Maybelle Improvement Association had been formed and was highly active under its choleric leader, John J. Silvey. In December, 1955, Coastal Northern California had been hit by the most serious flooding of the Twentieth Century. Barron Park was not excepted; both Barron and Matadero Creeks overflowed badly and there was much property loss. As a result, the County Flood Control District (a predecessor to today’s Santa Clara Valley Water District) was considering building a 240-acre-foot flood control reservoir on Matadero Creek in the Stanford Foothills. The Improvement Association was in favor of this. It also led the movement to get street lights installed in Barron Park; on August 27, 1956 Silvey himself pulled the master switch, located near Loma Vista School (now Juana Briones) to light up the area.

1966—Forty Years Ago—Build-out is Achieved

By 1966, Barron Park was essentially built out. Since then, the only developments have been condominiums on what had been commercial or agricultural properties along El Camino, and small cul-de-sacs wherever a lot was big enough to accommodate. In March, the neighborhood was treated to the spectacle of an eminent domain condemnation trial when a jury awarded Giacomo Sambuceto \$259,000 from the City of Palo Alto for its taking of 4.4 acres to create Juana Briones Park.

1966 also saw the adoption, by the County Board of Supervisors, of the Barron Park General Plan. This document was created by the citizens of our neighborhood under

the leadership of the renovated Barron Park Association. Led by Dick Placone, a resident of Chimalus Avenue, the General Plan attempted to set policies towards development and land use that would address problems such as conversion of R-1 housing to apartments. The El Camino Strip was being invaded by tawdry and noisy businesses such as muffler shops and adult book stores. The General Plan led to later adoption of special neighborhood-oriented zones to control the kinds of businesses that could locate on our strip.

1976—Thirty Years Ago—Our First Full Year in the City

On December 8, 1975, the thirty-year “Cold War on the Peninsula” came to an end as the remaining core of the original larger Barron Park neighborhood was finally annexed to Palo Alto. 1976 was a year of getting used to the feel of having responsive police and fire departments, of pleading our issues at the City Council with real standing as voters. It was also a year of nervousness as Barron Parkers waited to see if the City would renege on its’ pre-annexation election promises to keep hands off our curb-and gutter-less streets and preserve our semi-rural feel.

The U.S. Bi-Centennial celebration on July 4 was the occasion for the first large public party in the brand-new Bol Park. Hundreds of neighbors attended the picnic, listened to the speeches and enjoyed the new ambiance in the old donkey pasture. Palo Alto celebrated the year by painting fire plugs in interesting ways throughout the neighborhood and the entire city. Villas de Las Plazas was built on the old McElroy Lumber Yard property on El Camino and Los Robles—the first of the new condominium developments in the neighborhood. Many Barron Parkers were shocked by the bright blue roof tiles installed in the development.

1986—Twenty Years Ago—The Year of Toxics

By the 1980s, some long-ignored chickens had come home to roost in the Stanford Research Park and its environs—including our neighborhood. In February, well testing showed serious chemical contamination of most of the deep wells in the neighborhood, a few of which were still being used for domestic purposes. This situation

led eventually to the neighborhood, under the leadership of the Barron Park Association, persuading local and state government agencies to cooperate in a complex and costly groundwater cleanup program that is nearly finished today.

In April, there was a chemical fire at Vari-an that stimulated the neighborhood to consider air pollution events as potential toxic threats to our safety. In October, a large Symposium was held under the auspices of the BPA to assess the various toxic threats and develop approaches to deal with them.

Also in 1986, an election was held and the voters passed a Benefit Assessment tax to pay for flood control work on our creeks, which has since been done. We are now protected against the putative “100-Year Flood”. On a more mundane level, Barron Park citizens petitioned for and won a traffic signal on El Camino Real at Matadero Avenue. In October, the BPA co-sponsored a celebration with the Women’s Heritage Museum, of the installation on La Selva Drive, of a state historical marker honoring Sarah Wallis, the suffragist and community leader who built the Victorian Mansion that later became known as the Barron Mansion.

1996—Ten Years Ago—Passages

On February 16, 1996, our beloved neighbor and patroness, Josina Bol died at the age of 95. She had been an integral part of the neighborhood as a mother, businesswoman and friend for sixty years. Although Bol Park was named, at her request, to honor her husband Cornelis, it could have just as appropriately been named Josina Bol Park, for she, as much as any other person, made it possible.

In many ways, 1996 seems to be an uncharacteristically quiet year in our history. The toxics seemed under control, the flood control project was nearly finished, there were relatively few divisive land-use issues troubling the neighborhood. The neighborhood was saddened by the loss of Lommie’s restaurant, almost the last of the old-style roadhouses from the early days, but gladdened to get a modern new drug store (Walgreen’s) in the neighborhood.

What will we be saying about this year of 2006, ten years from now?

KID'S KORNERS

By Linda Lui

Birthday Parties: Will They Just Grow Up Already?

[Editor's note: For those of you new to our readership, Linda and her husband, Abraham, adopted Jamie in China. For past articles from Linda, including this story, please see www.bpaonline.org and search on Linda Lui.]

I hope everyone had a fun and relaxing summer vacation. Ours was fun but hardly relaxing, at least not for me. It hasn't been for years.



Alex and Mom (me) at party#1.

All three of my kids have summer birthdays: mid-June, mid-July and September 1st. Alex, my eleven year old, has a birthday that coincides with the last day of school, give or take a day. Although June can feel like a blizzard of activity, a party at this time seems to capture the blissful mood of the end of the school year and the joyful anticipation of summer vacation.

This year we invited his whole classroom to sit in our front patio and watch Mad Science perform their "Fizzy Physics" show. We also ordered a whole lot of pizza. I was a little disappointed in the show: too many defective and uninspired tricks and poor time management. At one point, some kids were escaping to resume their ping pong game and I had to hog call them back so she could finish her act. I did, however, enjoy having another adult in charge of

entertainment so I could focus on handling food and drink issues and be available for "behavior management," when needed. And the cotton candy making was a good value as a \$35 add-on feature and would probably qualify as the highlight of the show. I welcome any reasonably priced suggestions for next year.

The party ran from 5:00pm to 8:00pm in the evening. At 5:20pm, one boy asked me when the party was starting. I studied my watch and announced with authority that it had already officially started and pointed out the ping pong table in the middle of the garage as evidence. "Nobody wants to play with me, what else you got?" My mind raced as he channeled his unclaimed energy on tearing apart my thoughtful party decorations. "How about a pogo stick?" I quickly offered, as one of my helium mylars floated up, up and away. He took. Who would have guessed that a rusty pogo stick would someday save my sanity?

While a mid-June party captures the high of a new season, mid-July competes with month-long summer trips to Maine and/or Canada and/or family reunions at Lake Tahoe. Everyone's summer plans are well under way by this time and party#2 was a bit more problematic for me to put on the calendar. I decided to invite only three of Matthew's (former) classmates from his Kindergarten class and call it a birthday "playdate-party."

Although I had confirmed the date ahead of time with the other parents, I still feared the impact if one or (gasp) two friends couldn't make it at the last minute. My worries proved unnecessary and everyone showed up eager to party. The four boys had a terrific time with our small Toys 'R Us blowup slide-pool in the 95 degree heat. But the time of day that worked well with my 11-year-old didn't pan out quite so well with my 7-year-old. After a hot active day at summer camp, he was already very tired and now, extremely excited: a toxic combination. He was wild-eyed and didn't respond to his name. He didn't seem to hear me at all. A quiet voice

in the primitive part of my brain said "learn from this."

In spite of my weariness from my tired wild-child, the concept of a small group party was a good one. With four children, it's large enough to feel festive and yet small enough to allow spontaneous deviations from the plan. While I may forego even the unwrapping of presents at a larger gathering to avoid mayhem, I was able to let Matthew take a few toys out of their boxes and play with them with his friends. True, all of the foam rockets were launched and remain either on our roof or in the tree. And assorted Bionicle joints are strewn all around the house. But they were perhaps as entertaining as the paid performance at party#1 and minus the cost. Not to mention that the kids were physically active and engaged with each other rather than being spectators. And although I was busy from start to finish, I



Matthew, far left and his "playdate-party" guests: L to R, Bryan Calderon, Lucas Watkins and Cooper Smith.

didn't feel the need for "scheduled intervention" with this smaller group.

Another benefit was being able to pile the revelers into my car and cart them all home in one tidy swoop. It felt like a graceful way to end the event for them; the giddy laughter in the car growing quieter with each farewell as another backpack left my trunk. Finally there was only my little Matthew, drunk with happiness, sitting quietly beside me as we returned home in the almost darkness. I glanced at him and his eyes were twinkling thought-

fully at me. He started to say something. Was my middle child finally moved to say something resembling appreciation? "Can I have more pizza when we get home?" Oh well. Later in the evening he asked if we could do a playdate-party again next year. "Sure, sweetie," I smiled, feeling successful. I'll take whatever I can get. I'm a parent.

As I collapsed exhausted in bed that night, my husband Abraham sighed in sympathy, "two down and one to go." As of this

writing, Jamie's special day and party#3 is yet to come. But I feel the worst is over since Jamie is still in pre-school and we are still taking the road less stressful: piñata and cupcakes at school and a small extended-family celebration at home.

But having recently witnessed her brothers' rollicking friends-at-home parties and being the observant child that she is, my easiest gig might be up much sooner than I'd like. Wish me luck.

A Consideration on BPA Term Limits

By Doug Moran (BPA President)

Note: this article is a personal perspective on this issue and represents part of the Board's discussion.

In 1997, the BPA Board amended the Association Bylaws to make officers who had served two consecutive two-year terms in the same office ineligible for re-election to that office. I voted against that change because of experience in similar organizations. My biggest concerns were about the office of Treasurer and Secretary: Many organizations have problems finding people who can do the job, and once they do, the organization's leadership works hard to retain them.

However, I also had concerns about the

limits on the President: I was worried that we wouldn't have someone willing and able to become President every four years. This precise situation arose this spring: I reached the end of my two terms as President, but there was no available successor. Consequently, the Board amended the Bylaws to allow terms to be extended in these circumstances.

My experience as President has changed my perspective: I now believe that flexible term limits for the President—and consequently Vice President—are a good thing, but not for the usual reasons—dislodging people who have become ensconced. Instead, BPA presidents are increasingly sucked into an increasing number of City-wide efforts, leaving less and less time for BPA activities. Term limits on the BPA President acknowledge this inevitability, and provide a useful reminder to the Board that the Vice President needs to be actively preparing to be his/her successor.

This problem is actually a compliment to Barron Park: We have an organizational culture and range of expertise that has provided a good training ground.

BPA ONLINE

Want to help? Need help in an emergency? Visit www.bpaonline.org—click on "Emergency Preparedness."

Want to see past BPA newsletters? See www.bpaonline.org—click on "Newsletter Archives."

Have a business in Barron Park? See www.bpaonline.org—click on "Barron Park Businesses."

Want information about the BP Donkeys? See www.bpaonline.org—click on "Barron Park Donkeys."

Want to contact Committee Chairs? Visit www.bpaonline.org—click on "Organization."

Welcoming New Residents

The Barron Park Association Welcoming Committee welcomes new residents to Barron Park with a thick packet of information brought by one of our 76 volunteers! If you would like to be greeted or would enjoy greeting new neighbors to our community, please contact Welcoming Committee Chair Gwen Luce at 650-224-3670 or gluce@cbnorcal.com.

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Doug Moran, President

Maryanne Welton, Vice President

Christian Kalar, Secretary

Mary Jane Leon, Treasurer

Linda Elder

Nancy Hamilton

John King

Gwen Luce

Karen Michael

Patrick Muffler



Committee/ Activity Chairs

Beautification: Vacant

Neighborhood Businesses Liaison:

Karen Michael

Creeks/Flood Control: Christian Kalar

Neighborhood Safety & Preparedness:

Patrick Muffler

May Fete: Vacant

History: Doug Graham

Membership: Linda Elder

Natural Habitat & Environment: Vacant

Newsletter: Nancy Hamilton

Parks: Vacant

School Liaison: Christian Kalar

Seniors: Mary Jane Leon

Traffic & Streets: John King

Welcoming: Gwen Luce

Zoning & Land Use: Maryanne Welton



BPA meetings are held the 3rd

Tuesday of most months at 7:15 p.m.

Call Doug Moran for location: 856-3302

<http://www.bpaonline.org>

HOW THE BPA STACKS UP

By Doug Moran

From time to time, I am asked what the BPA could learn from the other neighborhood associations. But first, what the other neighborhoods think the BPA does particularly well:

■ **Membership:** Except for the very small neighborhoods (a few blocks), the BPA has the largest active membership, with many making contributions above the basic dues. The Membership Committee (current chair: Linda Elder; recent: Mary Jane Leon, Don Anderson) remind people to join or renew and keep the database up-to-date (Irene Beardsley) so that members get their newsletters and other notifications.

■ **The content of our newsletter.** From time to time, we get questions about how the BPA manages to put out a newsletter superior to organizations many times our size. The answer is our long-time editor Nancy Jo Hamilton—she does the invisible job of "herding cats" to get submissions in on-time and then keeping the production and mailing process moving. Before Nancy, the BPA had a newsletter in name only.

■ **The layout of our newsletter** (Patrick Coyne).

FOR MEMBERS ONLY!

We have created PDF files of past newsletters. See the complete newsletters, including full-color photos! These files are available ONLY to current BPA members.

The directory address will change each year. The new address will be published in the Summer edition. The files may take awhile to download (file sizes given).

We will furnish the yearly directory address change on our Online Membership Form receipt, as well as in the Summer edition of our newsletter.

You need to be a member of the Barron Park Association to receive the Summer edition, as well as the Fall and Winter editions. The Spring edition is mailed to all households in Barron Park. That's when we ask for new and renewed membership.

BPA Website: <http://www.bpaonline.org>

■ **Welcoming new residents.** Other neighborhoods use the massive Welcoming Packet assembled by Gwen Luce as a template, and they envy the energy and commitment of our Welcoming Committee in reaching out to new residents.

■ **Emergency Preparedness:** Barron Park has been a leader for at least two decades (current chair Patrick Muffler; previous leaders Art Bayce, Katie Edwards, and Inge Harding-Barlow). This leadership involves a combination of creating programs that are adopted by other areas of the city, and providing mentoring and other support for groups organizing their area. Some of this work is done under the auspices of the BPA, and some is done as part of the City's PANDA program.

■ **Effective public meetings:** I get questions from other neighborhoods about how Barron Park gets various meetings with the City that they don't. I respond that Staff has learned that these meetings are productive—they get valuable feedback from residents, and avoid problems further down the line. Such meetings require appropriate preparation of both the presenters and the audience, and then leadership during the meeting to keep the presenters and audience members from going off on tangents. Although this involves many people, it is particularly the realm of the President (Doug Moran) and Vice President (Maryanne Welton).

Areas where we are good, but don't stand out:

■ **E-mail (list manager Doug Moran):** The BPA was an early leader in this, but the other neighborhoods have caught up. There are interesting differences in how the various neighborhoods use e-mail and discussion groups to communicate. Because of technology changes and the increasing technical sophistication of the BPA membership, a re-evaluation of what the membership wants and finds useful is probably overdue.

■ **Web site (Nancy Jo Hamilton and Doug Moran):** Again the BPA was an early leader among neighborhood associations in using

the Web. However, much of the content is years old (still valuable as reference material). Other than routine materials (for example, online versions of the newsletter) and minor additions and updates to existing pages, there is relatively little new content.

■ **Social events:** With the May Fete, the Welcoming Gathering (recent addition), and the Holiday Parade and Caroling, we seem to be about average for the active associations. The *BPA House and Garden Tour* was discontinued by its organizing committee because of "Been there, done that." Even though the Tour was still popular, they couldn't come up with enough ideas to keep it fresh.

Where do other associations do more than the BPA?

■ **Meetings on individual issues:** This is partly good news: We don't have some of these meetings because we don't have the problems being addressed (surge in crime, flooding, ...). On other topics—such as Alma Plaza—we advertise meetings organized by other neighborhood associations. When I check the sign-in sheets at these meetings, I see too few BP residents to have justified a meeting of our own. Of course, this doesn't take into account people who would have attended if the meeting had been more conveniently located. However, I don't hear many comments "I would have liked to attend, but ..."

■ **Midtown has done a lot to support and promote its retail district.** Over the years, the BPA has made various attempts in this area, but the situation along our section of El Camino is very difficult (more difficult than Midtown's), and these efforts have died after failing to gain adequate traction. A new effort is starting as a follow-up to the successful effort to get sponsorships for May Fete from local business (Chair: Karen Michael is seeking comments and suggestions). *Reminder: Try to patronize our local businesses to strengthen them and the overall business district.*

I am considering making this a "living document" so I would appreciate additions and other comments.

Ideas Wanted— New BPA Activities

The BPA is always looking for good ideas for new activities to benefit the neighborhood. These include social events, service activities and neighborhood improvements. One of the stumbling blocks for people with good ideas was determining if there was enough interest from participants and from people who would help organize it.

To facilitate this process, we would like to gather suggestions that can be combined into an online survey to get feedback from the membership.

Please send your suggestions to me at dmoran@dougmoran.com.

Help Wanted— MAY FETE

Two years ago, Jean Lythcott and Julie Lythcott-Haims took over the leadership of the May Fete committee and infused it with new ideas and vigor. They also made some much-needed changes in how the event was run so smoothly that it was invisible to most participants.

Unfortunately, they cannot attempt a "three-peat" so we are looking for a new chair (or set of co-chairs). Note that May Fete is not a static event, but one in which elements are constantly being added and pruned, according to the interests and energies of the committee.

Toxics Update

By Doug Moran

On June 28th, Acting Fire Marshal Dan Firth met with residents about concerns about hazardous materials at CPI, and Research Park companies in general. I ran into Firth several days later at City Hall and he commented that he was very pleased by the meeting, that the questions had been good and that there had been no acrimony.

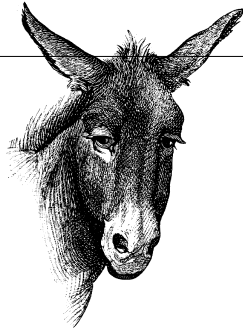
I attribute this to the excellent preparation for the meeting by the group of Chimalus neighbors, led by Jeff Dean and Art Liberman.

As a result of their research on this issue, the group submitted well-received comments to Palo Alto's Planning and Transportation Commission which is in the process of updating and improving the rules related to hazardous substance storage.

Help Support the Barron Park Donkeys!

Support for Perry and Niner comes completely from the generosity of their neighbors and the community. The donkeys receive no tax dollars, no government funds, no funds from the City of Palo Alto, no grants from any animal welfare or humane organization. They are a part of the neighborhood simply because people who live here care about them and care about continuing this unique opportunity. In return, Perry and Niner provide warmth and joy to those who walk by their pasture; a rural equine experience for suburban children and adults who visit them on Sundays in Bol Park; an opportunity for humane education for children in Barron Park Schools; and a general reaffirmation for all of us of our connection to the natural world.

General farrier and veterinary expenses for the donkeys total about \$1,000 a year. Food costs about \$600 a year. Funds for the donkeys are managed by Acterra (formerly the Peninsula Conservation Center Foundation), which acts as fiscal agent for the Donkey Project, providing insurance



and handling donations and financial affairs. Fees for these administrative services totaled about \$200 this past year. All of these expenses are funded solely through donations.

All those who care about Perry and Niner seek to guarantee their proper on-going care and shelter, as well as to ensure that assets will be available for health concerns as the donkeys age. The handlers hope that those generous neighbors who have contributed in the past will consider increasing their support this year. Contributions for the donkey's care may be sent to: The Palo Alto Donkey Project, ACTERRA (Action for a Sustainable Earth), 3921 East Bayshore Road, Palo Alto, CA 94303-4303. The check *must* be made out to "ACTERRA—Palo Alto Donkey Fund," "ACTERRA" must be included.

For further information about making a contribution on behalf of the donkeys, or if you would like information about how to become one of the volunteer donkey handlers, please call Bob Frost, 493-8272 or email at bofrost34@yahoo.com.

PREPARING FOR BIRD FLU

Public Education Meetings:

Sat Oct 21, 9:30-11:00 am, Mitchell Park Community Center

Wed Nov 1, 7:00-8:30 pm, PAUSD Offices, 25 Churchill Ave.

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Barron Park Association
4028 Laguna Way
Palo Alto, California 94306

Nancy "Jo" Hamilton

EDITOR

Patrick Coyne

DESIGNER

Mary Jane Leon

Gwen Luce

Doug Moran

Patrick Muffler

COPY EDITORS

Linda Elder

Doug Moran

Patrick Muffler

Mary Jane Leon

Doug Graham

Linda Lui

CONTRIBUTORS



Physical Therapy

In your home or office

Cheryl Lilienstein, PT

(650) 856-0626

Barron Park Resident

Transitioning to a more local practice



Driftwood Deli & Market

- Sandwiches - Fresh bread -
 - Dairy - Groceries - Magazines -
 - Liquor - Catering - Indoor and
 - outdoor seating -
 - Homemade soup & salads -
- Mon.-Fri. 8 am to 8 pm, Sat. 10 am to 7 pm
Buy 2 sandwiches—get 3rd one FREE- exp. 10/31

3450 El Camino Real

Palo Alto, CA 94306 (near Creekside Inn)

Phone: (650) 493-4162

Fax: (650) 493-4171



NEW HOMES FOR SALE

One of our contributions to Barron Park is to pay the \$800-per-month property taxes on the donkey pasture.



JAMES WITT

GENERAL CONTRACTOR

TEL: 650.494.2041

WWW.JAMESWITT.COM

Prodigy Press Ad Goes Here

KATHY HAIR DESIGN

Ask for Seniors Special

- Hair Cut \$9 & up
- Kids \$8 & up
- Perm. \$30 & up
- Shampoo & Set \$15
- Mon.-Sat. 10 am-6 pm

650.493.8500

3535 El Camino Real
Palo Alto, CA 94306

Advertising is limited to Barron Park Businesses. The BPA is not responsible for false or misleading advertising.

Please see our listing of Barron Park Businesses at www.cyberstars.com/bpa/business. To be listed free of charge, your main office must be in Barron Park. For advertising rates in our newsletter, please contact Nancy Hamilton at 494-2941.

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION
NEWSLETTER
FALL 2006



www.bpaonline.org
4028 Laguna Way
Palo Alto, California 94306

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PALO ALTO, CA
PERMIT NO. 143